

Read India
Books

handmade in
India

written & illustrated by
Olivia Fraser



RGF Pratham
SERIES

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The text and the illustrations of this book are the artist's record and impressions of her journey across India. The maps are to be viewed as artistic representations and not as maps representing boundaries to any degree of accuracy.

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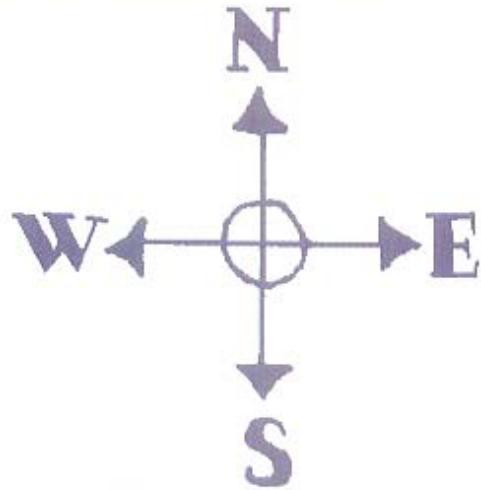
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INDIA





If you travel around India from NORTH to SOUTH and from EAST to WEST, you will see people making things everywhere - in the fields, beside the road, in open doorways, and on verandahs.

They make things to eat, to wear, to sell and to help build India and its people.

And it's all there for everyone to see...

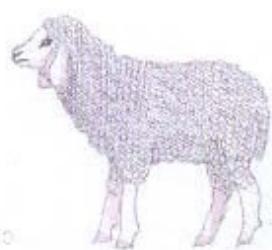
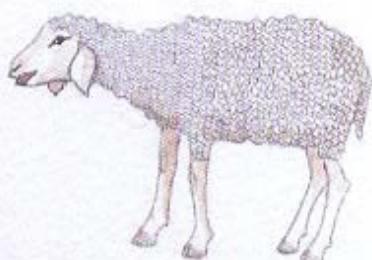
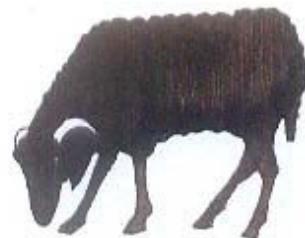
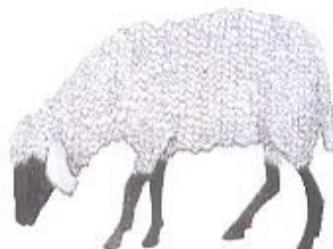
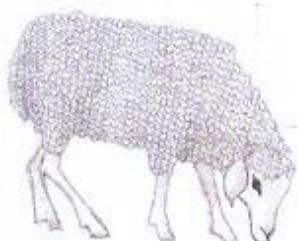
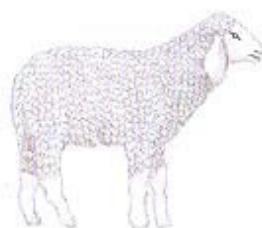
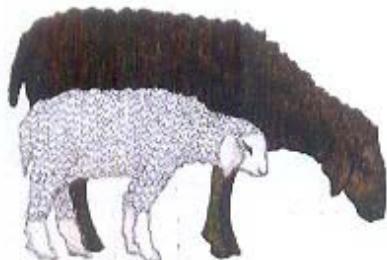
Here are two Himachali women I met when I was walking in the Himalayan mountains in Himachal Pradesh in the NORTH.



Do you know what these women are doing?



I have painted them with sheep because they are using SHEEP'S WOOL for what they are making. One woman SPINS the wool to make it into an even thread. The other is KNITTING a multi-coloured, woolly jumper. Wool can be dyed all the colours of the rainbow. But I rather like the woman who is wearing a natural coloured outfit-it's the same colour as the brown sheep.



elma fraser 2000

This is a sight you see all over India :
Women collecting water from a well to
drink and cook with. These women are
from Haryana in the NORTH.

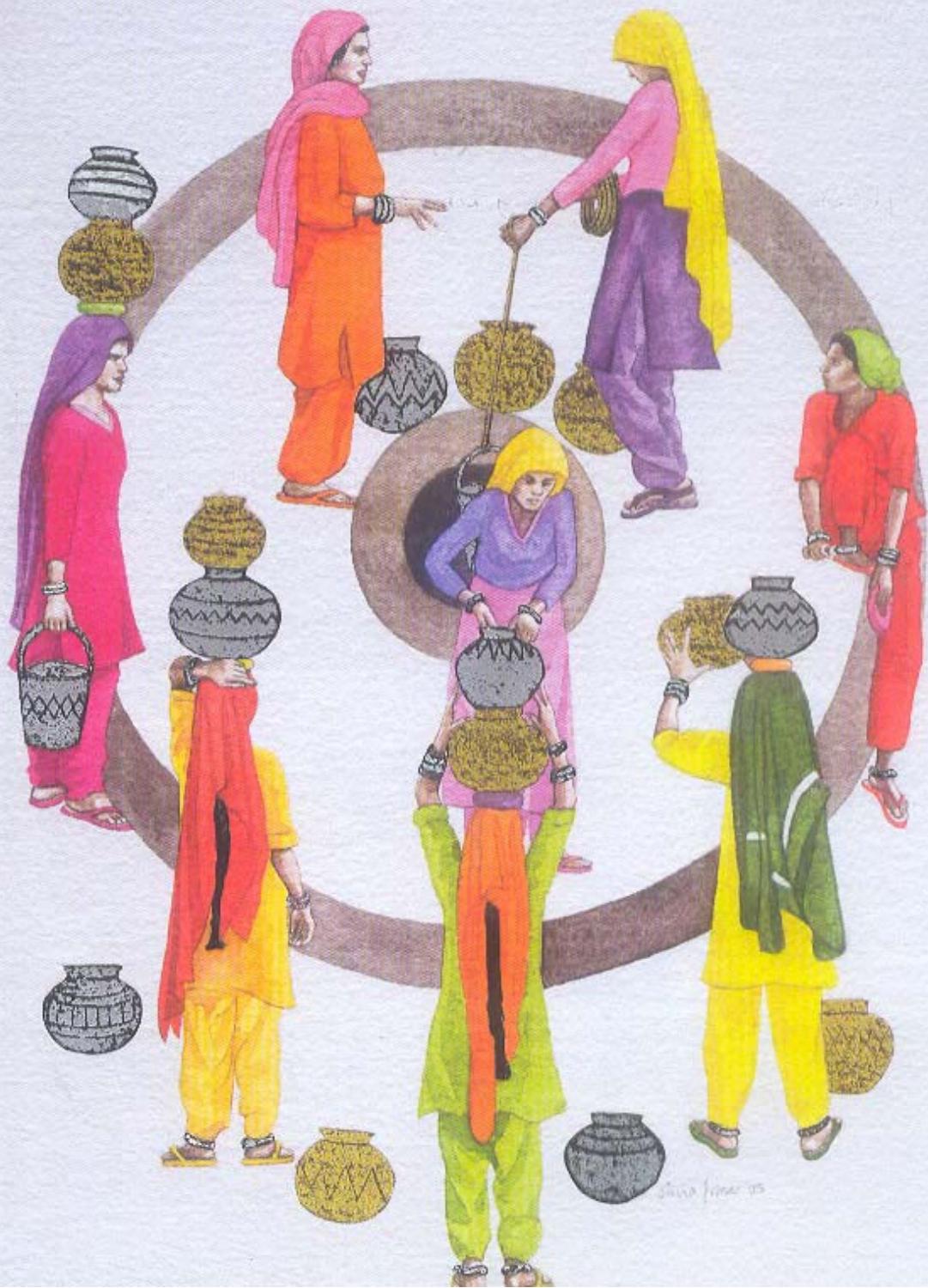


Well water is usually the cleanest and safest water to drink as it comes straight from deep under the ground, far from all the pollution that can seep into surface water.

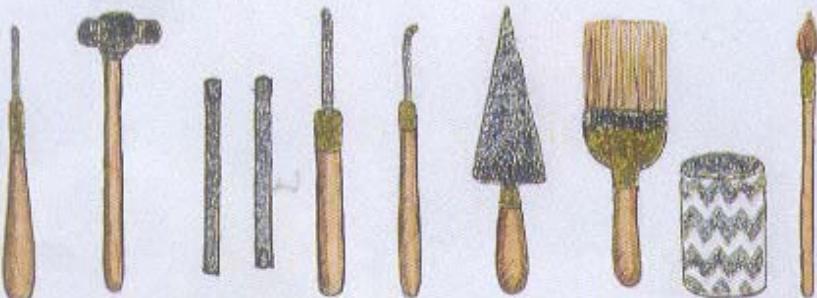
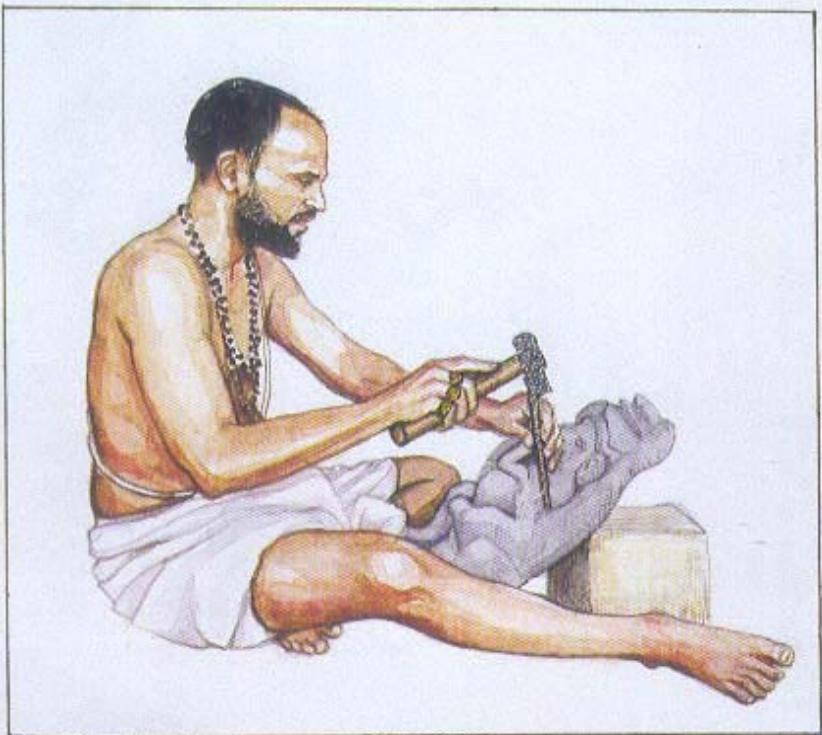
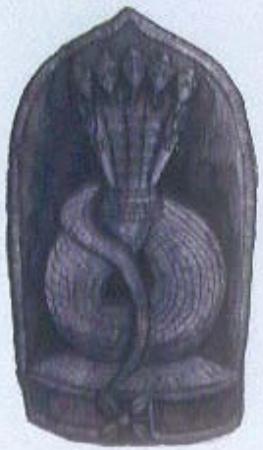
These women are wearing the typical North Indian dress-the Salwar Kameez. Look at how well they balance two pots of water on their heads.

Could you do that?





Sunita Jaiswal 05



Alma Hossler 2000

I saw this man at work sitting outside his workshop in Karnataka in the SOUTH. He is a sculptor and he is using a hammer and a chisel to make an image of a god out of stone.



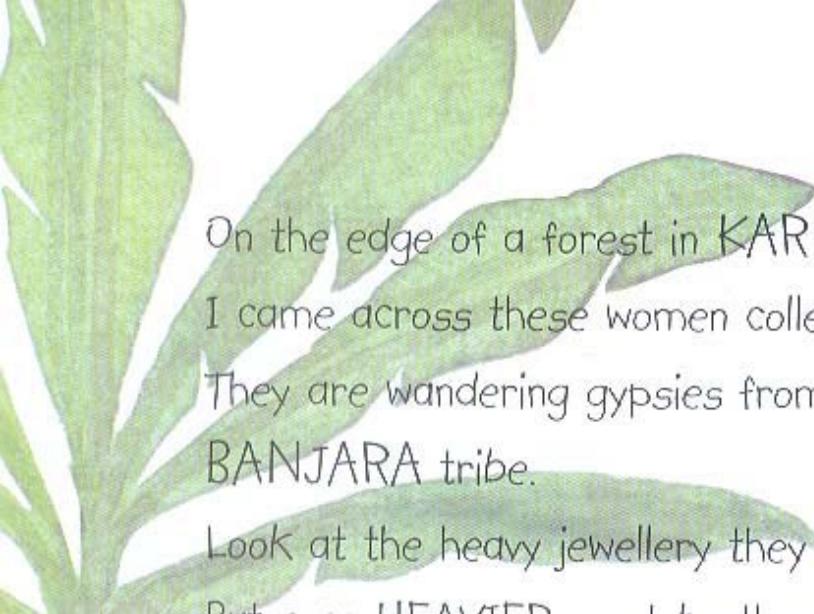
Can you guess which one?*

I have painted all the tools he uses for his work. I think they make interesting shapes all lined up together. Surrounding him are other sculptures he has made - of animals and people.

Do you recognize any of them?



*Ganesh



On the edge of a forest in KARNATAKA
I came across these women collecting FIREWOOD.
They are wandering gypsies from a tribe called the
BANJARA tribe.
Look at the heavy jewellery they wear.
But even HEAVIER must be these huge bundles of sticks
they are carrying.
Can you see how they have wound up pieces of cloth into
a tight circle and placed it on their heads to help them
balance the load? This also protects them from any
thorns or spikes the sticks may have.

Can you guess what fruit is growing on
the trees?





These women are also from KARNATAKA and they are helping MAKE one of the most important things to eat in India - RICE.

Rice grows in flooded fields called PADDY FIELDS. Here the women are ankle deep in the paddies replanting the RICE SAPLINGS at regular intervals so that the rice will grow strong and healthy.

Can you see how the women have tied up their sarees so that their clothes don't get wet in the water?

I think their backs must ache by the end of the day, don't you?



I saw these men mending a railway
track in Goa on the SOUTH
WEST coast of India.

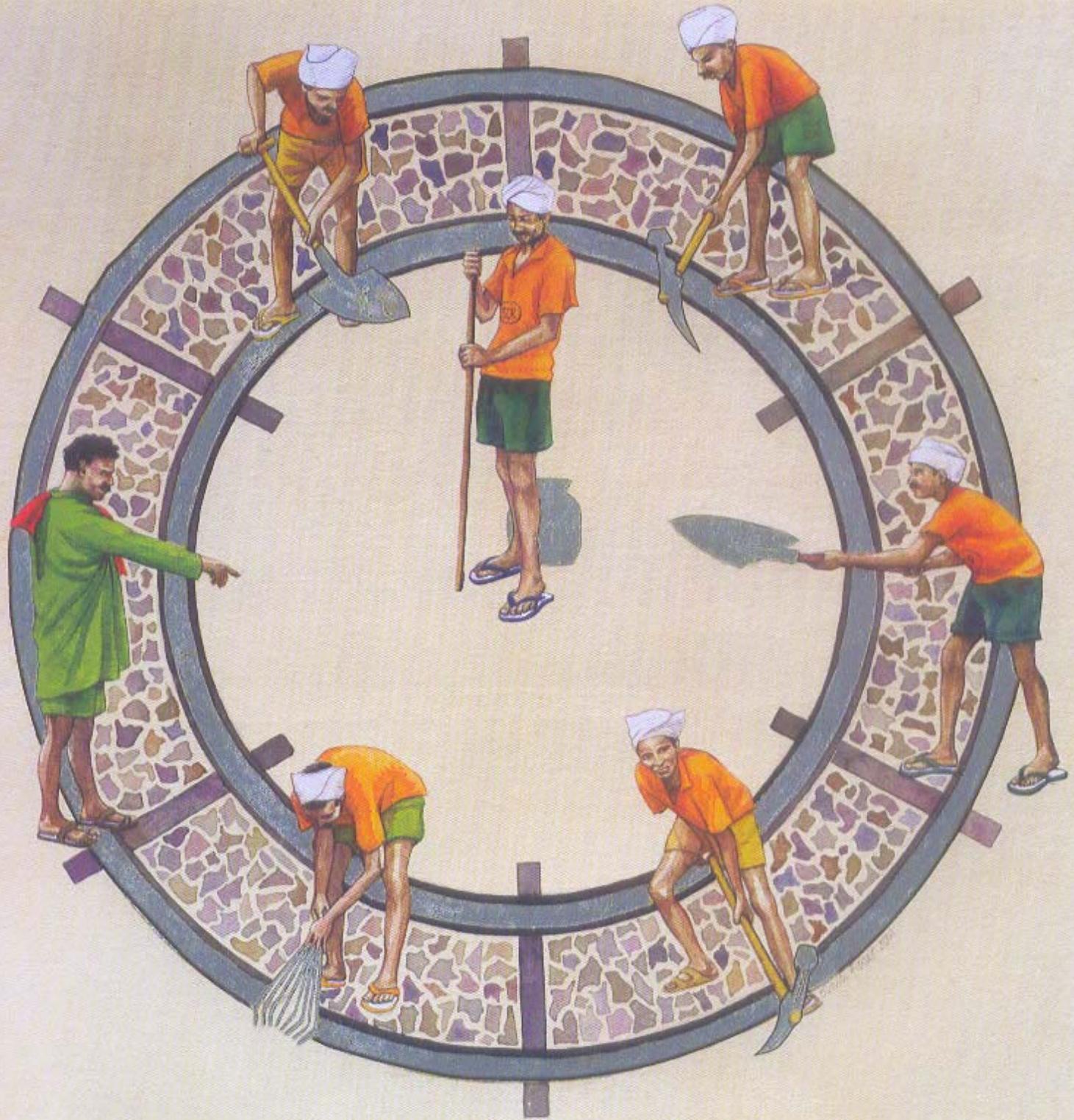


Can you see all the different tools they use?

I like the fact that the workers' uniforms use the
colours of the Indian flag:
orange, white and green.

Can you see the man who is in charge
of all the workers?

I made the railway into the shape of a clock as
trains have to be on time.





Ganga Potse



I visited a village in Orissa in the EAST
entirely made up of crafts-people.
Everybody was sitting outside their
houses and workshops MAKING things.

This lady is a papier-mache painter. She has painted,
amongst other things, some brightly coloured
images of JAGANNATH. Do you know
who he is? He is Krishna by another name.

Look at all the different patterns and the
different colours the painter uses.

She hopes to sell her wares to tourists and pilgrims.

I like her elephant masks best, do you?





Beside a dusty village road in Bengal in the EAST, I came upon this man - called a 'thathera'* - beating tin strips into a bucket shape.

First he decorated the tin by puncturing holes in its surface with a pin to make interesting patterns.

Then he rolled the metal into a cylinder (as he is doing here) and making a great racket, he bashed the two ends together with small pins.

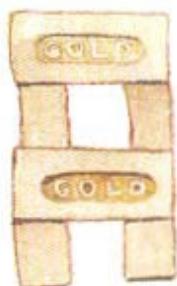
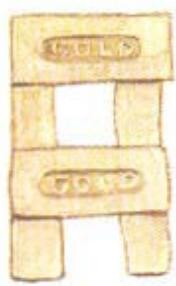
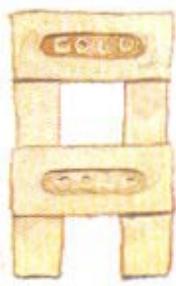
Finally he attached the base of the bucket in the same way.



They look very pretty, don't you think?

* This is the word in Hindi





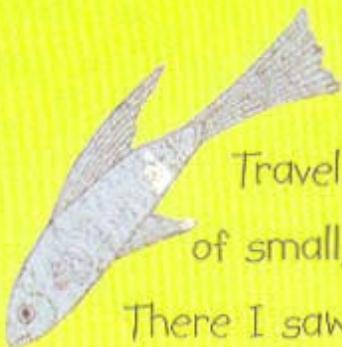
These people are making BRICKS.

I like the way the name stamped on the brick is GOLD, as if they were nuggets of gold instead of bricks made out of baked earth.

Here the women are taking some specially prepared BRICK CLAY and are shaping it in the rectangular wooden moulds. They slice off any excess clay with a strip of metal. Bricks are baked in a special oven called a KILN and the entire process of making a brick takes 25 DAYS.

These ovens have tall, thin, tower-like chimneys. You can see these CHIMNEYS all over India, dotting the countryside. I saw these brickmakers in BENGAL.





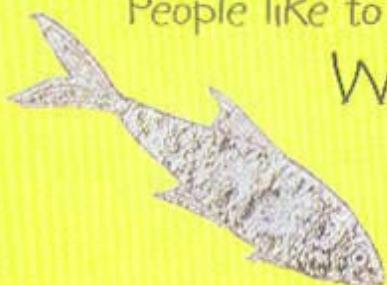
Travelling through BENGAL, I passed a lot
of small, round ponds called Pukurs.



There I saw these FISHERWOMEN carrying their round
NETS with the day's catch in the little BASKETS which
they strap to their heads.

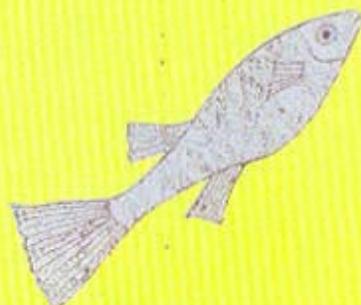
I watched them catch fish. A group of women stood up to
their waists in WATER, forming a row in the pond. They
each splashed the water vigorously holding the bamboo rim
of their nets. Then, altogether, they would dip their nets
lower into the water; and, altogether, scoop up any fish.

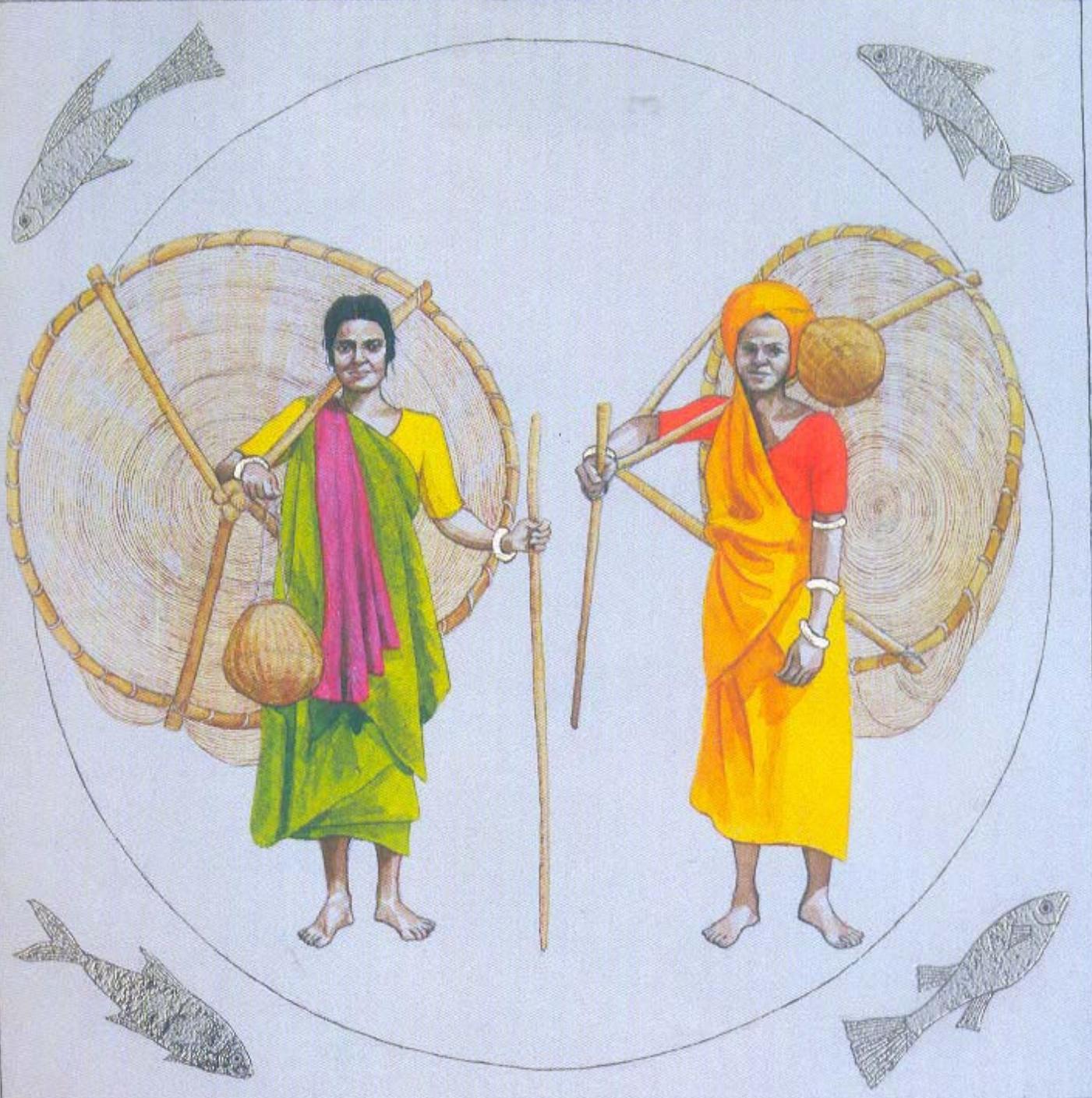
I have painted the fish their actual size.

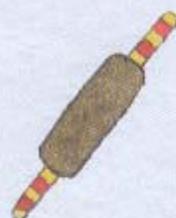
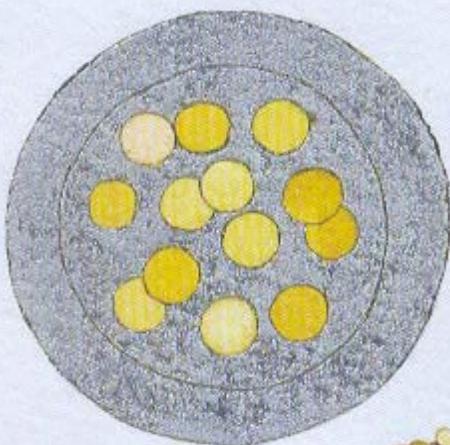
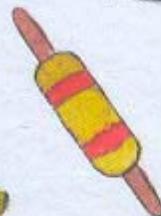


People like to eat them fried and crispy.

Would you?



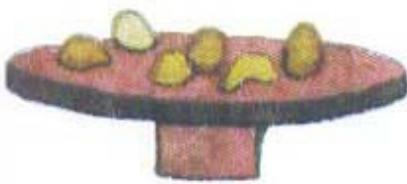
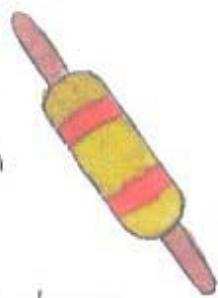




I went to a wedding in RAJASTHAN in the WEST and I watched a huge wedding feast being prepared.



These women were MAKING CHAPATIS. They sat in a circle, each person helping with one stage of the chapati making, so the first lady sieved the flour through a metal sheet with lots of holes in it. Another, adding water, kneaded it into dough with her fist. The next separated the dough into little balls, ready for the final rolling out into a chapati shape.



A large plate of ready rolled chapatis was then whisked off into the kitchen to be cooked for the Wedding feast.



These women are ROAD BUILDERS. I saw them flattening out some rocky ground in RAJASTHAN.

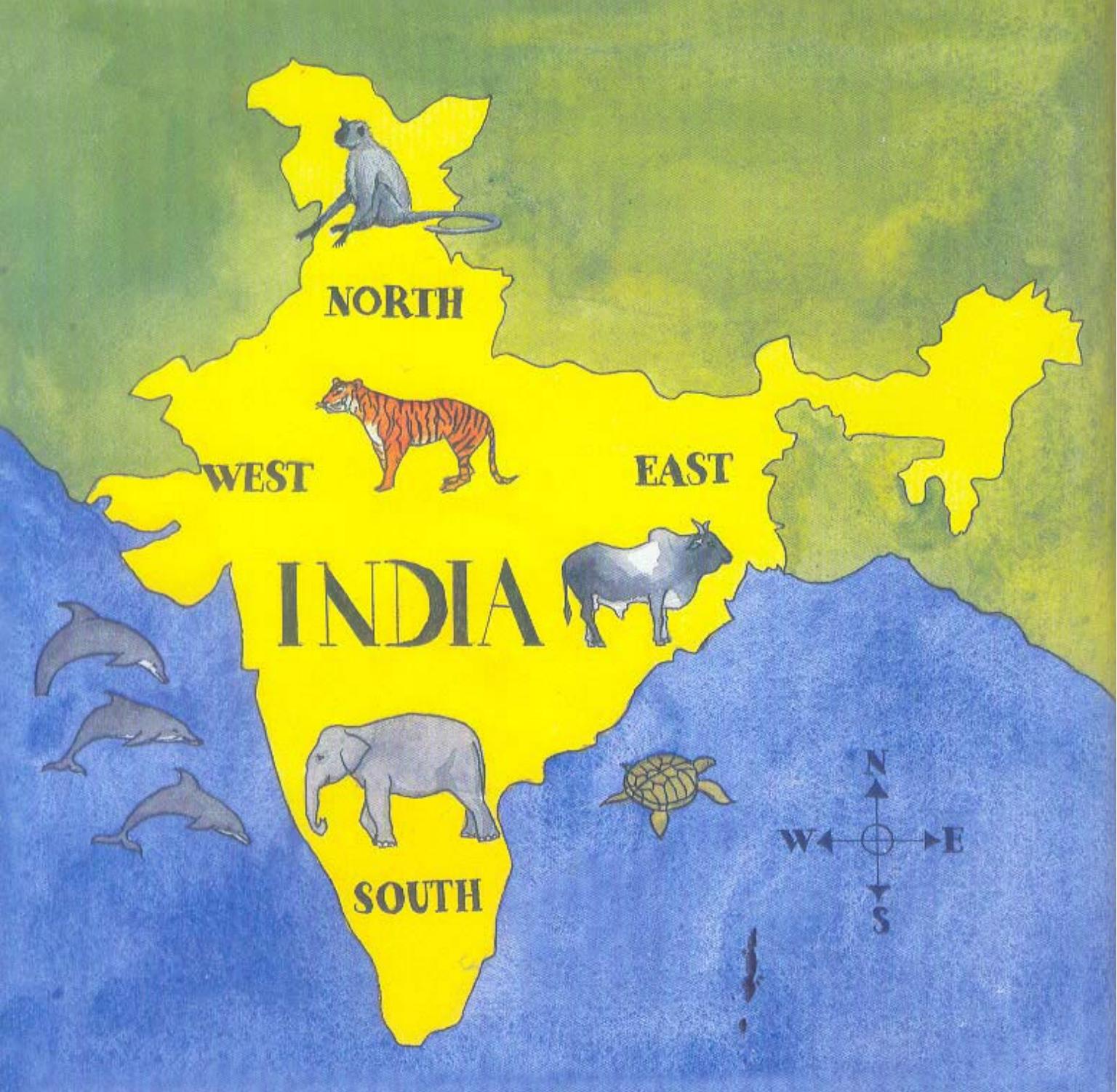
They used their picks and shovels to help clear a pathway through the desert. Later, a proper road for cars and trucks will be laid down.

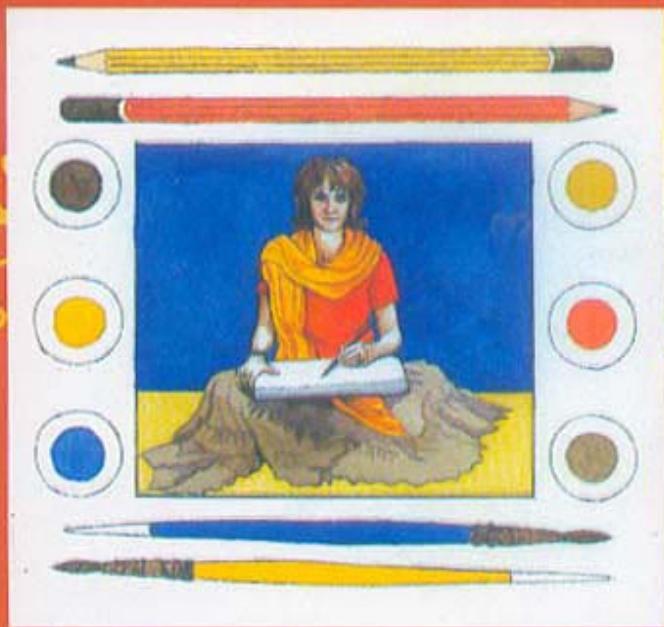
These women come from the RABARI tribe in Rajasthan.

I was particularly struck by the colourful clothes they wore and the strength these women had to do this very hard work.

Which lady is wearing the most bangles?
And can you spot a tiffin box?







OLIVIA FRASER has travelled around India painting for the last ten years. This book has arisen from her observations of the vast colourful array of people she has come across during her travels.

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